

Effective Server Responses

Off-Premise



The way you respond to a customer who is trying to purchase alcohol is the key to whether the customer accepts your response. Make clear statements and speak directly to the point. Be sure to use “I” and be non-judgmental to customers. Always give a reason for your actions and relate to the customer using non-confrontational or indirect strategies.

Chat briefly with a customer to determine if they are already intoxicated. If so then:

- ♦ Remove the alcohol the customer is trying to purchase from the counter
- ♦ Do not turn your back on them
- ♦ Ask for help from the manager or other employee if needed
- ♦ Offer to call a cab
- ♦ If the situation escalates, call law enforcement if needed
- ♦ If they drive away, try to get the license plate number and call law enforcement
- ♦ Shift your attention to the next customer
- ♦ Document EVERYTHING

Here are some phrases that may be useful:

- ♦ “Is there someone I can call to come pick you up? I’m concerned about you getting home safely.”
- ♦ “I can’t sell you any alcohol because I’m concerned about your safety.”
- ♦ “I’m sorry, but I could lose my job if I sell you any alcohol.”
- ♦ “I’m sorry. I can’t sell you alcohol.”
- ♦ “The law says I can’t sell you any alcohol.”
- ♦ “I’m sorry sir but I’m protecting your best interests as well as mine.”
- ♦ “I couldn’t live with myself if something were to happen to you.”
- ♦ “I am not able to sell this to you because it appears you have already been drinking. It is state law and a condition of my job.
- ♦ “I’m sorry, I cannot sell to you because you do not have an ID. It is a condition of my job. I’m sure you understand.”
- ♦ “I understand how you feel. If you give me your name and number I will have the manager call you. What is a good time for him to call?”

IF IN DOUBT, DON’T SELL!